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NME AWARDS SPECIAL

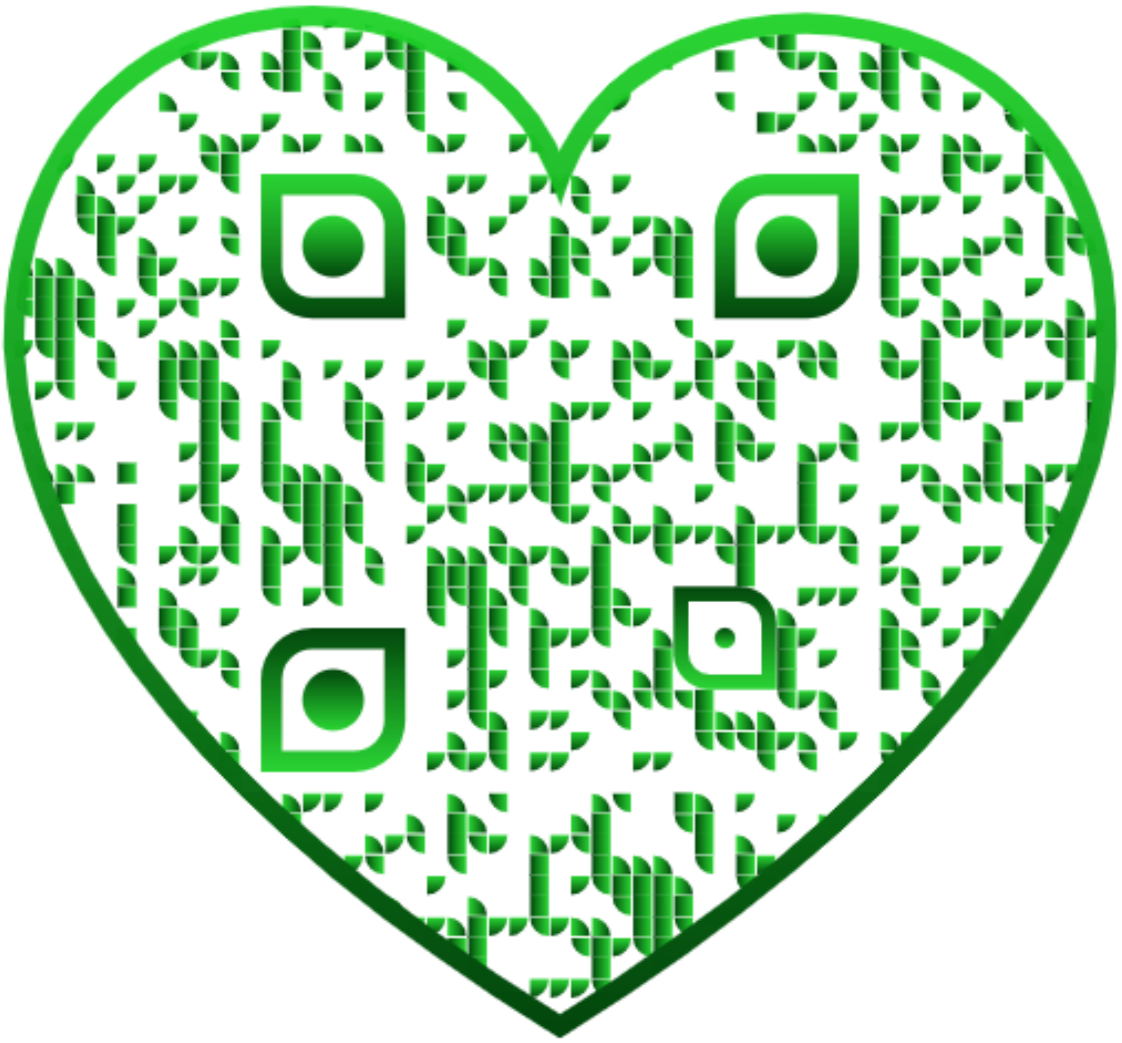
NME AWARDS 2016 WITH Austin ~LIVE MUSIC CAPITAL OF THE WORLD~

MUSIC
FILM
STYLE

COLDPLAY

Exclusive interview with NME's 2016 Godlike Geniuses

ALL THE WINNERS FROM THE MOST ROCK'N'ROLL NIGHT OF THE YEAR



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NME

Hello...

THE *NME* AWARDS HAS *always* been the lairiest night of the musical year. There was the time, in 2006, when The Cribs singer Ryan Jarman was hospitalised after throwing himself onto a table covered in glasses and ended up needing stitches in his back.

Then there was 1998, when The Verve won four awards. Frontman Richard Ashcroft refused to leave his table to collect them, so *NME*'s then editor Steve Sutherland had to hand-deliver the goods.

Liam Gallagher pulled the same trick in 2001, forcing host Peter Kay to bring the Hero Of The Year award to him. "My mum's looking for that coat," Kay said of Liam's white, fluffy number. In 2012, Liam's bro Noel accepted his Godlike Genius award by saying "You're f***ing welcome" to anyone who'd ever been influenced by him.

Then there was the time in 1998, when Beck won Best Solo Artist and sent in an acceptance video of him in a Jacuzzi, surrounded by his band wearing horse masks.

This year was just as rock'n'roll. There were amazing performances, drunken antics, unbroadcastable behaviour and a set from Coldplay befitting their Godlike Genius status. Read all about it on page 15.

For obvious reasons, this year's awards were dedicated to Brixton boy David Bowie. But they were also dedicated to Viola Beach, a talented young band right at the beginning of their careers, doing what they loved, whose dream ended way too soon.

MIKE WILLIAMS
Editor-in-Chief
@itsmikelike

Kanye West p30

COVER STORY

15 NME Awards 2016 with Austin, Texas

This year, like every year, the *NME* Awards with Austin, Texas was a riot of bands, booze and next-level debauchery. Here are the night's big winners...

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COVER PHOTO: ZOE MCCONNELL CONTENTS PHOTO: GETTY

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AGENDA

WHAT EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT THIS WEEK

Viola Beach (l-r): Tomas Lowe, Kris Leonard, River Reeves, Jack Dakin

Tributes pour in for Viola Beach

From Liam Gallagher, The Stone Roses, The Courteeners, The Cribs and Billy Bragg

WARRINGTON INDIE BAND Viola Beach – comprising of members Tomas Lowe, Kris Leonard, River Reeves and Jack Dakin – were killed in a car crash on Saturday, February 13, along with their manager Craig Tarry. Their vehicle plunged 80ft off a bridge in Stockholm while travelling to Arlanda Airport following their first overseas gig at Sweden's Where's The Music? festival. The band's debut single 'Swings & Waterslides', originally released in August 2015, is set to enter the Top 40 of the Official UK singles chart today. All proceeds from the sale will go to the familes of the band and their manager.

Tributes for the band have poured in. Liam Gallagher tweeted a link to buy 'Swings & Waterslides', signing off "RIP LG X". The Stone Roses posted the song on Twitter, along with a message urging fans to get Viola Beach to Number One. The Courteeners' Liam Fray tweeted: "Heartbreaking news. Watched them soundcheck in December with us. They were destined for big things." The Cribs' Ryan Jarman posted a series of tweets, saying: "Heart goes out to the Viola Beach guys and their families... The sacrifice many bands around the world make for gig-goers every day – giving up days for travelling... sadly, roads and skies can be dangerous." Billy Bragg tweeted: "Tragic news. My thoughts are with their families and friends." **Luke Morgan Britton**

For more on this story, go to NME.com

Teenage icon

Justin Young, lead rabble-rouser in The Vaccines, on the indie giants' upcoming Teenage Cancer Trust gig

What's so good about Teenage Cancer Trust gigs?
"It's an institution because of where it is and what it's for and who's involved, and something we've admired and appreciated from afar. So it's an honour to be asked to play – and to play the Royal Albert Hall. It's a no-brainer."

What's so good about the Royal Albert Hall?
"I've never played there before. It's an incredibly beautiful venue so this is a bucket-list moment."

Did organiser Roger Daltrey mention that you said Florence And The Machine should have headlined Glastonbury over The Who last summer?
"No! I'm entitled to an opinion. I've never met him, but if you grow up in the UK playing rock music, it goes part and parcel with appreciating and being inspired by The Who."

How's the new Vaccines album coming along?
"We're in the studio. We've got a bunch of songs we're excited about. There's always been an ambition with this band to push ourselves every time we make a new record. Nobody could accuse us of making the same record twice."

Will you play new songs at the TCT gig?
"There's a 50/50 chance."

How is the new album different from 'English Graffiti'?
"'English Graffiti' was written over a long period of time and we kept on having breaks in between sessions, so if I could level any criticism against it it's that it sounds quite disparate. Lyrically, it looked outwards towards the world. There's a lot of self-reflection and self-loathing so far in this one. It's going to be a masterpiece, I've no doubt about that." **Gary Ryan**

The Vaccines frontman Justin Young

The gigs

Four ace nights... and Simply Red

April 20 The Vaccines/ Everything Everything
April 21 Simply Red
April 22 Bring Me The Horizon
April 23 New Order
April 24 David Gilmour

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From Friday Feb 19, at royalalberthall.com

GOOD WEEK

Rebel Wilson
The comedian smashed it at the BAFTAs, satirising the Oscars diversity row.

Game Of Thrones
There's a new trailer. Ned Stark's in it. So is Joffrey. What is going on? Winter is coming!

Matthew Perry
Critics savaged the *Friends* actor's West End play *The End of Longing*, which he wrote and stars in. Could he *be* more disappointed?

BAD WEEK

ANDREW HUGHES/NME, SKY, GETTY IMAGES

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Katherine Ryan

OFF THE TV AND IN YOUR FACE

THIS WEEK

Black holes and revelations

SORRY. I REALLY tried not to write about Beyoncé this week. By the time you read this I'm sure there'll be countless 'Beyoncé Super Bowl' thinkpieces up on the femsites. In summation of those: Yes, Beyoncé performed 'Formation' a day after releasing it and is an absolute weapon who emboldens women, black people and, most dangerously, black women. This angers some men, white people and, most dangerously, white men. She nearly fell over dancing and that's the clip that the media focused on even though she ultimately DID NOT FALL OVER and she never will #YAS #QUEEN #SLAY etc. Also, my dad thinks the song is called 'Information' and please, nobody correct him.

Speaking of powerful black phenomena, I do not understand last Thursday's big announcement about the detection of gravitational waves. I've read many articles, but there's just no part of it that makes even a little bit of sense to me. You know how some people say that all the secrets of the universe are right in front of us but we just don't have the capacity to see them? It's like that; like explaining World War One to a goat. Like smelling out of your elbow. I'm just never going to get it.

A team of scientists heard and recorded the sound of two black holes colliding a billion light years away. I listened to the 'chirp' and I'm pretty convinced that whoever was guarding the microphone accidentally took it to the toilet and was too embarrassed to admit the truth. Where do I begin with this? WHAT IS A LIGHT YEAR? It's got nothing to do with time. It's 9 trillion kilometres. Show me the genius that decided to give that unit of length an allotment of age? It takes light in a vacuum (what's it doing in THERE?) a year to get that far. Big deal! You don't see me calling my boyfriend's dick 'half a second long'. Oh, I was born 5.3644444e-10 light years from London. F*** off.

Black holes (space vaginas) are bottomless gravitational pits from which not even light can escape. What kind of Kanye-level arrogance causes someone to say s***t like that without ever having been inside one? Somehow, a black hole is HEAVY, with a mass 29 to 36 times that of our sun. HOW ARE YOU WEIGHING THE SUN? Stars give off energy and when they collapse, I guess they suck in energy and grow by absorbing everything in their path. It's what makes *Celebrity Big Brother* so entertaining. Those people are black holes.

According to Einstein, when two of them knocked into each other it created ripples in space-time, and now that we've listened to this noise it means he was right. Go ahead and read about it but I'm warning you, it'll make your eyes bleed. Wake me up next year when the chirp is playing the Super Bowl.

Beyoncé and a "space vagina"

"I'm warning you, science will make your eyes bleed"

PHOTOS: ZOE MCCONNELL, GETTY. REX. STYLING: JEN MICHALSKI-BRAY. HAIR & MAKE-UP: FIONA EUSTACE. SKIRT BY KATE SPADE MADISON AVENUE TOP BY: FOREVER UNIQUE. RINGS BY CARAT & SWAROVSKI BRACELET BY CARAT EARRINGS BY LOLA & GRACE

And another thing...

HEALTH SECRETARY

Jeremy Hunt's imposition of a new contract for junior doctors is bad for both patients and the NHS and will undoubtedly drive talented academics out of England to find better paid work elsewhere. However, we can't point the finger without also doing everything in our power to lessen the workload of hospitals and GPs. I've set foot in a doctor's office maybe 20 times IN MY LIFE. I have given birth and I have a chronic autoimmune disease, but unless it is absolutely necessary I use common sense to rest and take vitamins rather than racing into an overcrowded surgery. STOP going to the doctor! You're not even sick!

Health secretary Jeremy Hunt

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£42 *amazon.co.uk*

Hard case
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£18 *shop.beyonce.com*

Boys keep reading
David Bowie: On Reflection is a hardback book and double DVD celebrating the Zigmeister.
£27.99 *amazon.co.uk*

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£74.60 *madeindesign.co.uk*

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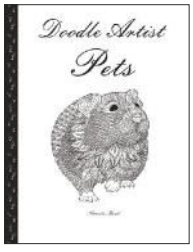
£69 *clusewatches.co.uk*



Cuddly colouring
Join the colouring-in craze. *Doodle Artist: Pets* includes ferrets and chinchillas. Aww!
£4.99 *amazon.co.uk*

Fred's threads
Basic Rights is the clothing range by The Vaccines' Freddie Cowan. What, no wetsuit?
£140 *basicrights.com*

Magic feet
Avoid getting (uni)corns (sorry) with these super-kooky light-up slippers.
£28 *smokonow.com*

Animal magic
The Lobster is a quirky love story about finding love or being turned into an animal.
£9.99 *amazon.co.uk*

Tits up
Beth Ditto and Jean Paul Gaultier collaborated on this dress-length tee, printed with the bullet bra corset made famous by Madonna.
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YOUR TOWN. YOUR MUSIC. YOUR STYLE

What's on your Headphones?

THIS WEEK

Cheltenham

Carly White ›
18, waitress

Listening to:
JAMIE T
The Man's Machine
"He was awesome at Reading Festival last year."

Wearing: Bellfield jacket, Topshop T-shirt, Primark jeans and Converse trainers.
The best thing about Cheltenham: "The buildings around here are all really pretty."

Tom Meldrum ›
19, student

Listening to:
STICKY FINGERS
How To Fly
"I've been on a big hype about them since I saw them in Bristol."

Wearing: RVCA coat, H&M jeans, Adidas shoes and Fabric hat.
The best thing about Cheltenham: "It's pretty posh, which makes you feel good!"

‹ Charlie Brown
20, student

Listening to:
PAPA ROACH
Hollywood Whore
"It's catchy and exciting. It'd be interesting to see them live seeing as there's only one original member left."

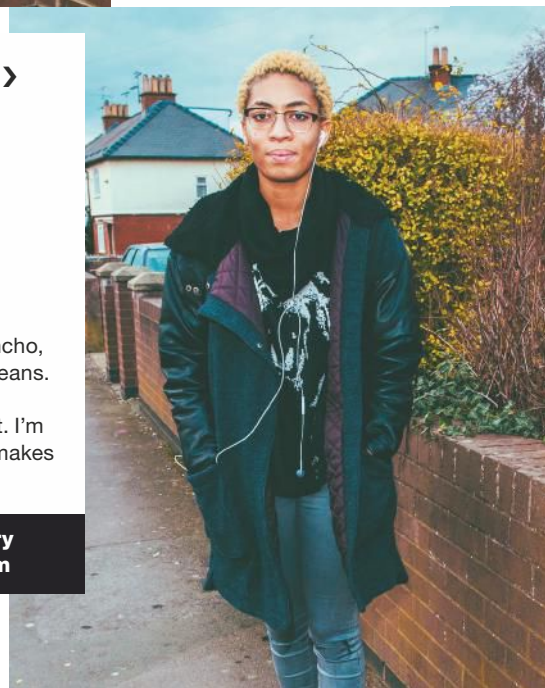
Wearing: Topman jacket and jeans, Next shirt and Converse trainers.
The best thing about Cheltenham: "Its cultural diversity."

LAURA PALMER

Shaquille Stephen ›
22, student

Listening to:
JAY-Z
Hard Knock Life (Ghetto Anthem)
"I definitely prefer his older stuff."

Wearing: Supreme poncho, ASOS coat, New Look jeans.
The best thing about Cheltenham: "It's quiet. I'm from Birmingham so it makes a nice change."



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NME AWARDS 2016

WITH *Austin*

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The music world descended on the O2 Academy Brixton on Wednesday night for the loudest date in the rock'n'roll calendar – the NME Awards 2016 with Austin, Texas. Godlike Geniuses Coldplay raised the roof, while Bring Me The Horizon, Foals, The Maccabees and Rat Boy profiled the best new music of the year for an audience of A-listers such as Blur, The Libertines, Idris Elba and Kylie Minogue. Some awards even got handed out – as voted for by you. Here's who won what... ●●●

L-r: Will Champion, Chris Martin, Guy Berryman and Jonny Buckland

NME AWARDS 2016 WITH Austin – LIVE MUSIC CAPITAL OF THE WORLD –

GODLIKE GENIUS

COLDPLAY

Deity-in-chief Chris Martin granted Matt Wilkinson an audience on the eve of being anointed at the NME Awards 2016 with Austin, Texas

CHRIS MARTIN IS almost giddy at the thought of picking up one of the most coveted prizes in music. "The first time we saw a Godlike Genius was when we won Best New Band [at the NME Awards in 2001]. I think U2 were getting their Godlike award and I remember thinking, 'How the f*** do you get to that?'"

The NME Godlike Genius award is given out yearly to the absolute best and biggest artists in the world. Back in 2001, Chris and Coldplay were seated at the back of the room during the ceremony itself, keenly watching in awe as, right next to them, their heroes milled about and sized each other up.

At this point, they'd barely uttered a word to Noel Gallagher or Kylie Minogue, let alone collaborated with them. Skip forward 15 years, however, and it's clear who's the biggest name in the room. In 2016, Coldplay are undeniably the headline act.

No surprise, then, that when we meet a few weeks before the show, Chris Martin is feeling reflective. It's early evening on the last Friday before Christmas – the messiest night of the year – and central London is alive with the hum of a million office parties.

Walking through the middle of it all is one of the most recognisable people on the planet, flitting between Regent's Park, Marble Arch and Winter Wonderland in Hyde Park. There's no entourage, no security, nobody to step in and help out should Chris Martin suddenly get mobbed while waiting for the lights to change on Oxford Street.

Suddenly a car pulls up and practically mounts the pavement before screeching to a halt just inches away from him. It's full of kids aged about 20, and the driver winds down the window.

"Excuse me, mate…"

Here it comes, I think.

"…can you park on the yellow lines round here?"

"I've got this!" Martin nods, a massive smile spreading across his face.

"It depends if it's a single or a double and what time of day it is," the Coldplay frontman bellows. "It's a single white line now. What time is it? Half seven? Well, it's been a long time since I've been in traffic, but… I'd go for it."

At this point, it becomes clear that nobody in the car has realised that the man giving them parking advice is one of the most famous people in music – focal point of perhaps the world's biggest band. On the contrary, they seem to be freaked out by Martin's overly helpful response and are now looking at him as if he's a bit weird.

"Uh… OK... thanks?" the driver says suspiciously, already winding up her window.

This is the double life that Martin is, remarkably, still able to lead.

On the one hand, he and his bandmates Guy Berryman (bass), Will Champion (drums) and Jonny Buckland (guitar) can play to hundreds of millions of people at the Super Bowl, hobnob with actual royalty and look forward to headlining Wembley Stadium not once, but four times this summer.

And on the other? Martin can literally be that guy you accidentally bump into outside Prêt because you're both too busy looking at your phone to concentrate on where you're going.

We'd met four miles away two hours earlier, straight from a session at his local gym in Primrose Hill, where he seems to be on first name terms with all the staff. This is the only time Chris can spare ahead of the Super Bowl and awards ceremony "madness" that will engulf the first quarter of 2016.

He's in a cheerful mood, whether it's talking about friends such as Bruce Springsteen ("A f***ing dude. He's a wise and generous legend to me"), Noel Gallagher ("The Oscar Wilde of our time"), Kylie Minogue, Michael Stipe, Jay-Z and Beyoncé – or, more seriously, about what it means to be world famous in 2016, the future of Coldplay, his family life and his hopes and fears for the world in general.

Hilariously, at one point during the walk – by a busy Green Park tube station, no less – he even does a fantastically loud, lippy impression of Mick Jagger, blurting out, "But Marianne, your legs are beautiful!" at full volume. Nobody even notices.

Chris may be an unlikely A-list rock'n'roll star, but he has to be one of the most ambitious too. He's made no secret of the band's desire to be massive ever since the release of their debut 'Parachutes' 16 years ago.

Their latest album, 2015's 'A Head Full Of Dreams', with its Beyoncé and Noel Gallagher cameos, trap influences ('X Marks The Spot') and Cure-meets-Strokes throwbacks ('Birds') – is their best yet, he reckons.

"It's what we've always dreamed of making. It's the first time we've felt, 'Yeah, this is who we are as a band; this is us; we're comfortable.'"

That feeling – being comfortable – includes accepting a self-deprecating view of how Coldplay are viewed in the wider world. Martin appears almost at pains to show he doesn't think their music is remotely important in the grand scheme of things.

"I don't know if we've delivered one masterpiece album, ever," he says matter-of-factly. He basically recognises he's not cool... but at the same time he couldn't care less.

"One thing that's quite liberating about being in a band is when you realise a lot of the world really doesn't give a f*** about music and they definitely don't give a f*** about what's cool and what's not cool," he says. "They just hear a song they like and then carry on with their day."

Try telling 100,000 people in a field at Glastonbury that Coldplay don't mean much, I reply. Coldplay will headline the festival for the fourth time since 2002 this June and Martin calls it "the closest thing to a homecoming gig" they've got.

"There are certain moments along the way – the most recent one being the Super Bowl – that are 'wow' moments," he says. "Other ones were that first little *NME* mention we got [back in January 1999, when we called them "already masters of both the epic chorus and the insular weep-out"]; the first time headlining Glastonbury; the Paralympics." And headlining Worthy Farm more times than any other act since it started back in 1970?

"Man," he splutters, "I'd play there every day if we

Martin says Coldplay's first mention in *NME* is one of their all-time "wow" moments

were allowed to."

Martin makes for boisterous, convivial and supremely easy company. Wanna know what's on his running playlist? OK: Drake, into Rammstein, into Joni Mitchell, into Selena Gomez. 'Hells Bells' by AC/DC, meanwhile, "will make me run twice as fast". Wanna know how he celebrates his kids' birthdays? By introducing them to the joys of Rage Against The Machine.

"The other day we had this silent disco, where you have this transmitter and about 10 sets of headphones, and we were having the best time. I could see that my son was full of energy, so we did 'Killing In The Name'. It was amazing to watch!"

Or how about his absolute BEST memory from the past 16 years of being a fully signed-up rock icon?

That, he says without even flinching, is easy. "Playing 'Johnny B. Goode' with Michael J. Fox. He has a Parkinson's benefit every year and *Back To The Future* is my favourite film. He said, 'Would you do some music at the event?' So I said, 'Yes, of course. I'd love to, but is there any way you could come on stage and we could re-create my favourite scene in film history?' And he said yes! He said, 'I'll time my medication so I'm most able to play [guitar] at that time'. So we started playing 'Earth Angel', the ballad they're playing in the film when he first joins the band and his pictures are disappearing, and then he came on and people went crazy and we played 'Johnny B. Goode'. My life just felt complete…"

But there's something unconventional about Martin too. He's scatty and eccentric, as if his head is a chaos of ideas, all bubbling around at once and fighting to get out. He can flit from being frantic and intense to jovial and back again countless times.

He's his own PR man too, someone who's exceptionally talented – shrewd even – at saying just enough in an interview situation to make the conversation fly without ever really revealing his deepest, darkest secrets. Which, when you think about it, is probably how he's managed to avoid any huge 'my tabloid hell' scenarios since breaking big with Coldplay.

When talk inevitably turns to his separation from Gwyneth Paltrow, which was made public in 2014, it's Martin himself who raises the subject.

"Of course, village gossip, we all like to know what everyone's up to," he says. "Me too. But once you start being in it you realise, well, this isn't really based on any truth. Especially if you go through a big break-up, there's no point reading about it. There's just no good gonna come from it."

Compared to the recent stories about Liam Gallagher and Nicole Appleton's messy divorce or Madonna and Guy Ritchie's well-publicised battle over son Rocco, Martin and Paltrow's split seems expertly stage-managed. After waiting a full year to announce the news via a statement on Paltrow's own Goop website, they made sure they were on holiday the day the story went live in an effort to minimise the impact on their two children, Moses, 9, and Apple, 11.

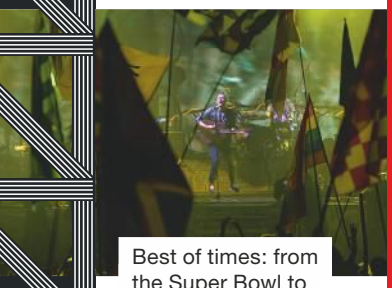
"Because," Chris says, "if you have kids and they start reading about their parents not liking each other, that's not good."

It worked too – aside from the much-mocked phrase "conscious uncoupling".

"It happened," Martin shrugs when asked about the clunky term. He sounds upbeat and easy.

"I don't mind speaking about it," he says. "We just spent a long time trying to maintain a friendship so there wouldn't have to be any kind of battle."

Martin now splits his time between the UK, where Berryman, Buckland and Champion live, and LA, where his kids live with Paltrow. "We share custody of the band," he jokes. "We do two weeks here, then we do our own thing for two weeks. Which is a wonderful way to work – it's how Brian [Eno, producer and long-time Yoda



Best of times: from the Super Bowl to Glasto to jamming with Michael J Fox

Head boy

Chris Martin on Coldplay being named Godlike Genius at this year's NME Awards with Austin, Texas

"It's surreal to me that we're even having this conversation because it makes me think: 'God, look at that journey.' And I don't really reflect on it often because we're always thinking, 'Where are we?' or 'What are we doing?' But talking to you, I'm like 'Holy sh**… we came from that table at the first awards to *that* table today!'"

PHOTOS: ZOE MCCONNELL, GETTY

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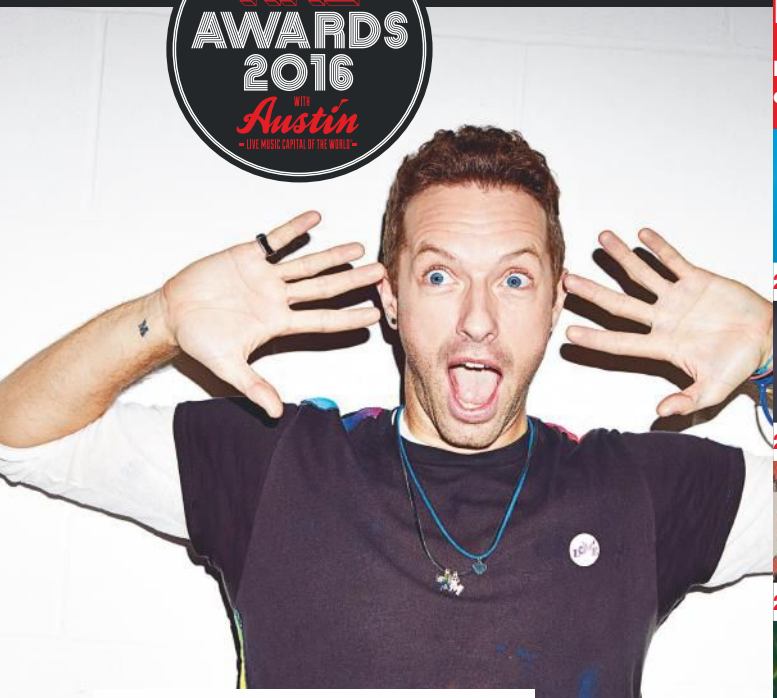


figure for Coldplay] wanted us to work.

"The two weeks off aren't really two weeks off – it just gives me time to get demos together or organise words and everyone else does their stuff."

The other members of Coldplay, while not nearly as recognisable as their frontman, are as integral to the cause today as they were when they rehearsed in Jonny's bedroom at 268 Camden Road before signing a record deal. At Coldplay's north London HQ The Bakery a few weeks later, it's clear there's a gang-like mentality that keeps the four of them tight.

"I've never felt like fame is getting in the way of me living the way I want to, which in certain circumstances it really can for Chris," Will tells me. "I don't envy that at all, but he handles it with extreme grace, I think. He's learned to deal with it."

For his part, Martin says he's never been happier, scoffing at rumours 'A Head Full Of Dreams' will be Coldplay's final album together. In an offhand remark to DJ Zane Lowe last year he compared it to "the last Harry Potter book", something Will raises his eyebrows about now.

"He does tend to say things that get misconstrued. But also, he does tend to say something like that after pretty much every album. He might say, 'This might be our last one' and I think he genuinely believes that. I always liken it to James Bond – as soon as they finish filming one someone's like, 'Are you gonna do another one?' and he's like, 'No chance, f*** off!'"

Martin wants the band to tour the album properly over the next 18 months (they played just 20 shows for previous album 'Ghost Stories', compared to 85 for 2011's 'Mylo Xyloto'), and Berryman confirms the band already have a series of worldwide festivals and gigs mapped out, which will take them up to late 2017. Only then will they consider taking time off and he suspects it "could only be six months" before they're "itching to get back into the studio".

So Coldplay, as all four of them insist, are not going anywhere anytime soon. The bottom line, explains Martin just before he heads west towards Knightsbridge, is that he's finally learned how to love being frontman for a massively popular global band.

"It helps me through things," he says. "And most of the time I walk around like a normal person, believe it or not." Best keep your eyes peeled the next time you're in town…

NME

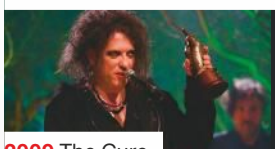
Holy roll

Every Godlike Genius of the past 10 years

2006 Ian Brown

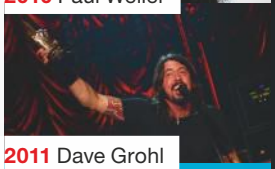
2007 Primal Scream

2008 Manic Street Preachers



2009 The Cure

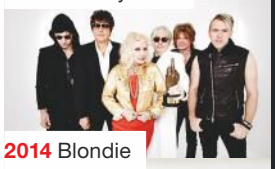
2010 Paul Weller



2011 Dave Grohl

2012 Noel Gallagher

2013 Johnny Marr



2014 Blondie

2015 Suede

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES, DEAN CHALKLEY

BEST INTERNATIONAL SOLO ARTIST

SUPPORTED BY Nikon

TAYLOR SWIFT

In her acceptance speech, Swifty confessed to finding the middle-finger salute of an NME Award a little disconcerting…

"Hey guys, it's Taylor, I just wanted to say thank you so much for voting me NME International Solo Artist. I got the award in the mail and I gotta be honest with you about this, when you first open up the box this feels a little aggressive. Then you get used to it. You put it on the shelf and you're like, 'You know what? I kinda like it, it's kinda like LOL, y'know?' Just saying. At first, first impressions are weird here, but now I understand that this is a strange compliment. You're being cheeky about it. Thank you so much for the award." ●●●

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NME AWARDS 2016 WITH Austín – LIVE MUSIC CAPITAL OF THE WORLD –

BEST INTERNATIONAL BAND

SUPPORTED BY Austín

RUN THE JEWELS

The hip-hop supergroup talk Page, cats and trash

Run The Jewels (l-r): El-P and Killer Mike

At last year's NME Awards you met Jimmy Page and said you wanted to kidnap him. Did you?
Mike: "Had we actually been able to kidnap Jimmy Page he'd have been all over [our album] 'RTJ3'. I'm a huge Zeppelin fan. We were really stoked to chase him down and jump in pictures with him. I almost peed my pants."

How did you approach this year's ceremony?
El-P: "By smoking marijuana and silently meditating on our victory. Awards ceremonies are great if we're there and we're the recipient of an award. The NME one was fun last year because we got to play and it was a good vibe and everyone was really cool."

Have you ever won anything before?
El-P: "I didn't even win a perfect attendance award at school. The only thing I've ever won is a slow, steady rise."
Mike: "I was first grade king. I was Mr Yearbook, sexiest chubby boy in ninth grade homeroom. And I actually have a Grammy."

Why do you deserve to win Best International Act?
Mike: "Presuming that you deserve it could be considered arrogant but we worked our asses off! When we come to Europe and rock it's pretty important to us, so to get Best International Band is f***in' great. I'm stoked."

Do the cats from your feline-only 'Meow The Jewels' remix album deserve the award as much as you?
Mike: "The cats deserve a shout-out, but the people who really deserve a shout-out, bigger than the cats, is the fans who got behind it. The money made from that album helps to fund lawyer representation for protesters and political activists around the world. I'm very happy about what we've been able to do because of some dumb-ass cats."

How do you feel about winning?
Mike: "I feel like the king of the f***ing world for a day. Then I'll get home, my wife will tell me to take out the trash and I'll return to regular husbandry."

Charli XCX

BEST BRITISH SOLO ARTIST

SUPPORTED BY PILOT

CHARLI XCX

Five reasons our Best British Solo Artist makes other popstars look boring

1 SHE'S A SHOCKER

She opens her shows with a song that goes, "*You said you wanna bang, well f*** you, sucker!*" She sings about masturbation and scumbag ex-boyfriends, swears like a Tarantino hitman and throws (unused) tampons out to her fans. None of this has the smack of being decided by committee – Charli's bad girl attitude is entirely her own.

2 SHE DESTROYS BOUNDARIES

Punk rock? She'll take it. Fuzzy electro? She'll have some of that. Teen-friendly US pop? Get in the sack. Charli straddles genres like no other.

3 SHE'S THE POP LOUIS THEROUX

Charli last year presented *The F-Word And Me* for BBC Three, a clever and personal discussion of feminism and the difficulties of being a female powerhouse in the music industry.

4 SHE'S A MASTER SONGWRITER

She co-wrote Icona Pop's 'I Love It', she's penned tunes for Gwen Stefani, Selena Gomez and Iggy Azalea and she's released three solo albums of solid gold bangers. She's a force to be reckoned with in pop's upper echelons.

5 SHE'S ALL ABOUT FEMALE EMPOWERMENT

"I wrote this record… for everyone on the planet with a p*ssy," she said of latest album 'Sucker'. "I'd love to see a punk revolution and loads of 14-year-old girls with shaved heads. I'd love for girls to be able to celebrate this record. There's a wave of highly intelligent female artists coming through that run their own careers, rocking the boat. I think it's cool that people like myself and Lorde are shaking sh*t up and changing the landscape."

PHOTOS: TIMOTHY SACCENTI/PRESS, NME

Foals (l-r): Edwin Congreave, Jimmy Smith, Yannis Philippakis, Jack Bevan and Walter Gervers

BEST ALBUM

SUPPORTED BY hmv

FOALS

What Went Down

Singer Yannis Philippakis on your top album of 2015

"This is the record that most closely mimics the sound in our heads. We wanted it to be lean. Both in the individual songs – less reverb, more punchy – but also as an album, so there wasn't any negative space. We wanted to put the absolute best on there and the 10 that made it are the ones that all of us were unanimous in liking. We wanted the title track to feel like the moment when an animal goes in for the kill – there's a savagery to it. A lot of bands get to the fourth album and feel they need to 'take a break'. Recharge. Go off and do solo stuff. We were completely the opposite."

24

TOPMAN

TWENTY:FOUR

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NME AWARDS 2016 WITH Austin – LIVE MUSIC CAPITAL OF THE WORLD –

NIGHTIE NIGHT
In the rare moments they remain onstage, Wolf Alice regularly invite the front row to join them up there

PHOTOS: TOM PULLEN/REX, ANDY HUGHES, JORDAN HUGHES, JENNFIVE

BEST LIVE BAND

SUPPORTED BY Red Stripe

WOLF ALICE

Wondering why Ellie Rowsell and co are the most thrilling live band in the world right now? These pictures should explain everything...

UP FRONT
Singer Ellie roars from the barricades of rock and roll

MOSH MINGLING
Very much a people person, Ellie likes a good walkabout in the pit

SILVER SURFERS
The in-band battle for longest crowd-surf is fierce. Bassist Theo Ellis once made it to the bar in Glasgow...

...while Ellie attempted to reach the burger van at the back at Glastonbury 2015

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Jordan Cardy
AKA Rat Boy

PHOTO: EMMA VIOLA LILJA

BEST NEW ARTIST
SUPPORTED BY TOPMAN

RAT BOY

Five reasons why Jordan Cardy is the UK's most exciting new act

1 He makes today's Britain seem fun
Whether getting mugged on his way home from failing to get into a nightclub in 'Fake ID' or detailing the breadline routine of Wetherspoons and lottery lucky dips on 'Sign On', Rat Boy regularly captures the defiant joy of being young in a country specifically designed to screw you over.

2 He's more than the next Jamie T
OK, he semi-raps tales of urban low-living. Yes, he's even described himself as "a sh*t Jamie T". But Cardy's art is more varied than that. He tackles surf rock, carnival pop and calypso and can knock out a doom-rock noise assault worthy of a spot on the Download bill.

3 He rides motorbikes onstage
Rat Boy gigs are a sight to behold. At one Stoke gig, Cardy rode onstage on a motocross bike. The bigger the stage, the bigger the antics.

4 There's room for you on stage too
Stage invasions and band members crowd-surfing are par for the course. Expect to become part of the action.

5 He might end up as your mate
In the spirit of The Libertines, Rat Boy often plays fan house parties after shows. He's known to dish out guest list invites to Twitter followers willy-nilly and is one of the most responsive rising social media stars. There's a solid chance, if you get involved in the Rat Boy party, that you'll eventually have a beer with the guy.

NME

NME AWARDS 2016 with Austin
LIVE MUSIC CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

All the winners at the NME Awards 2016 with Austin, Texas

GODLIKE GENIUS
COLDPLAY

NME INSPIRATION AWARD
YOKO ONO

NME INNOVATION AWARD
BRING ME THE HORIZON

BEST BRITISH BAND
THE MACCABEES

BEST INTERNATIONAL BAND
SUPPORTED BY Austin
RUN THE JEWELS

BEST BRITISH SOLO ARTIST
SUPPORTED BY 2 PILOT
CHARLI XCX

BEST INTERNATIONAL SOLO ARTIST
SUPPORTED BY Nikon
TAYLOR SWIFT

BEST LIVE BAND
SUPPORTED BY Virgin Media
WOLF ALICE

BEST ALBUM
SUPPORTED BY hmv
'WHAT WENT DOWN'
FOALS

MUSIC MOMENT OF THE YEAR
THE LIBERTINES' SECRET SET AT GLASTONBURY

BEST TRACK
'GIANT PEACH'
WOLF ALICE

BEST NEW ARTIST
SUPPORTED BY TOPMAN
RAT BOY

BEST VIDEO
'CHEER UP LONDON'
SLAVES

BEST MUSIC FILM
BLUR: NEW WORLD TOWERS

BEST FILM
BEASTS OF NO NATION

BEST TV SHOW
THIS IS ENGLAND 90

BEST ACTRESS
VICKY MCCLURE

BEST ACTOR
IDRIS ELBA

BEST FESTIVAL
GLASTONBURY

BEST SMALL FESTIVAL
END OF THE ROAD

BEST REISSUE
'FIVE YEARS'
DAVID BOWIE

BEST BOOK
M TRAIN
PATTI SMITH

BEST FAN COMMUNITY
THE LIBERTINES

BEST VLOGGER
KSI

HERO OF THE YEAR
DAVE GROHL

VILLAIN OF THE YEAR
DONALD TRUMP

WORST BAND
5 SECONDS OF SUMMER

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RADAR

MUSIC, FILM, TV, GAMES AND MORE – THIS WEEK'S ESSENTIAL NEW RELEASES

Catfish & The Bottlemen

Best NEW tracks

And when to drop them

BEST FOR ROCKERS ON THE PULL

CATFISH & THE BOTTLEMEN

Soundcheck

Bigger and ballsier than before, this heartening tale of a rising rocker trying the pull The One rattles and pounds with arena-filling confidence.

BEST FOR A SULK

JAMES BLAKE

Modern Soul

The most exciting man in glitchy electro returns sounding more emo than ever. Cheer up James, you just wrote a hit!

BEST FOR VIBING OUT

KEVIN MORBY

I Have Been To The Mountain

The gutsy 'I Have Been To The Mountain' sees US troubadour Morby tap into the woozy and vibrant Kurt Vile school of songwriting.

BEST FOR LOOKING ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

GWEN STEFANI

Make Me Like You

This perfect piece of bubblegum pop puts Stefani back on track following a harsh 12 months, which has seen her split messily with rocker husband Gavin Rossdale.

SPRING KING

BEST FOR MOSHING WINTER AWAY

SPRING KING

Rectifier

Manchester newbies Spring King are fast carving a name for themselves as the UK's most impressive new band. 'Rectifier' sounds like a radio-conquering indie staple.

BEST FOR FRIDAY NIGHT

JACK GARRATT

Fire

Beardy wonderman Jack Garratt proves that there's more to him than meets the eye – 'Fire' merges smooth R&B with Calvin Harris-inspired dance massiveness.

BEST FOR A SILENT SOB

JEFF BUCKLEY

I Know It's Over

This unreleased treat sees the much-missed Buckley deliver one of his most emotional vocals ever on The Smiths classic. It totally does Moz and Johnny Marr justice.

BEST FOR LIVING THE LIFE OF PABLO

KANYE WEST

Fade

A dancefloor filler with one of Kanye's best beats, this is one of the standouts on 'The Life Of Pablo'. It's all about the infectiousness of the warped soul sample.

BEST FOR GETTING MESSED UP TO

MISSY ELLIOTT

Pep Rally

As chaotic as Missy's ever sounded, this Super Bowl-influenced gem sounds like spring break and St Patrick's Day all rolled into one.

BEST FOR SITTING ON ONE'S LONESOME

JAKE BUGG

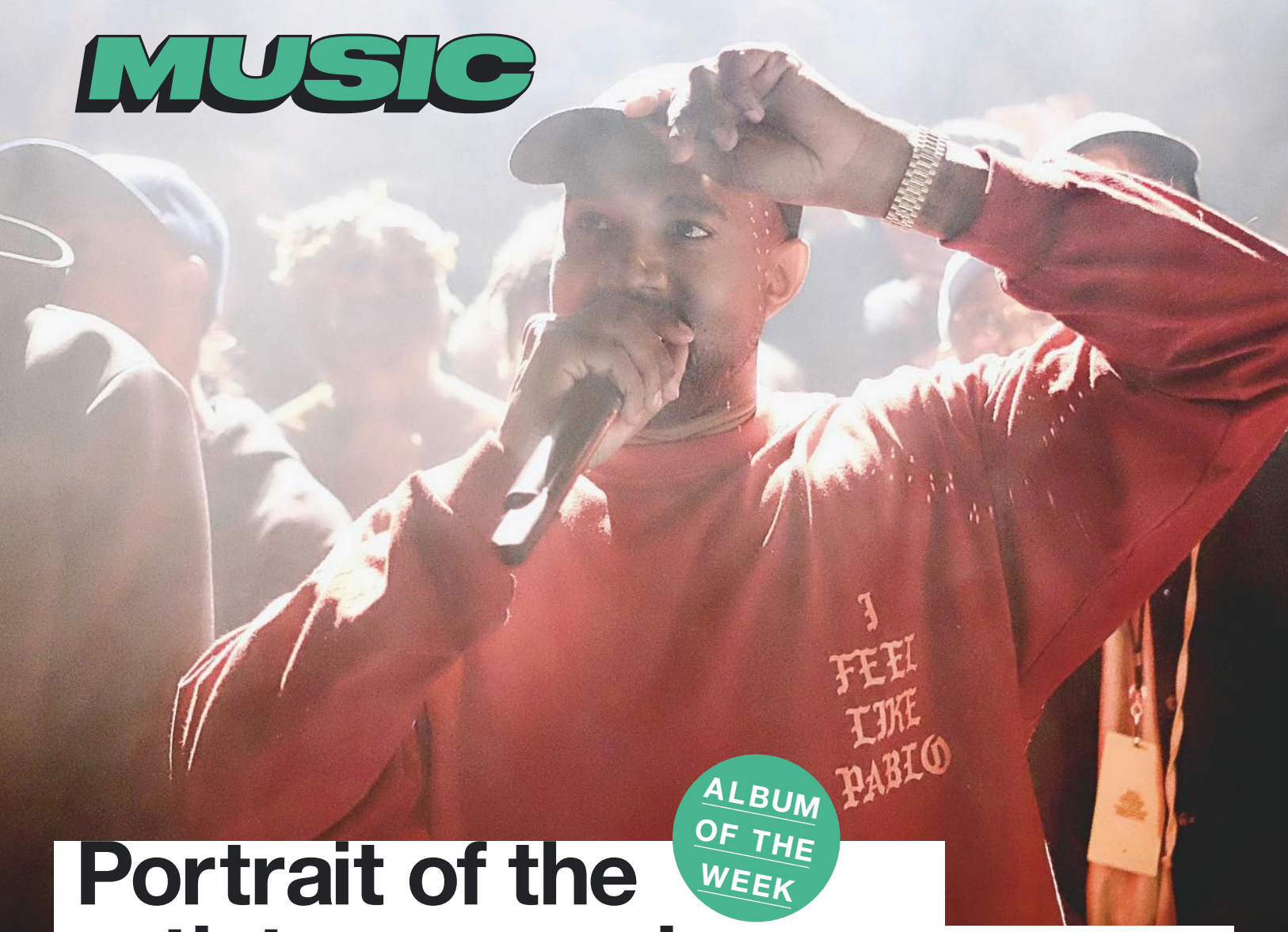
On My One

Nottingham songsmith Jake Bugg's got a bee in his bonnet about touring so hard and missing home, so he's turned it into a bluesy lament. Aw, diddums.

JAKE BUGG

For more new music, go to NME.com

PHOTO: JORDAN HUGHES

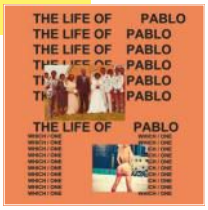


ALBUM OF THE WEEK

Portrait of the artist as a madman

Kanye West's dangerous, disjointed and confused seventh album retains the rapper's status as the most interesting musician on the planet

KANYE WEST
The Life Of Pablo
★★★★☆
SELF-PORTRAIT BONKERS



DRUG LORD Escobar, pioneering artist Picasso or great poet Neruda? Kanye West's seventh album 'The Life Of Pablo' sounds like all three. Dangerous, sparse, surreal, disjointed, hyper-realistic, cokey and constantly second-guessing its audience, it's a carnival of self-portrait that accurately depicts the psychic confusion of its author simply by being, itself, slightly confused.

West's last album 'Yeezus' sold less than the one before that, 2010's 'My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy', and there's been talk that part of the reason for '…Pablo''s fraught gestation was that Ye was looking for some commercial Miracle-Gro to sprinkle on it. That both the Paul McCartney team-ups 'Only One' and 'FourFiveSeconds' have been scrapped suggest otherwise. If anything, '…Pablo' is the sound of an artist going even more cubist in a two-dimensional pop world.

It's an album on which, at a moment's notice, Kanye veers from futuristic beats on the likes of 'Feedback' to bog-standard modern trap – as when Atlanta rapper Young Thug turns up on 'Father Stretch My Hands, Pt. 2' – to vintage soul on 'Ultra Light Beam'. And as befits an album whose tracklisting was publicly rejigged 24 hours before it finally launched, there's not much internal logic to connect these baubles. When he's not offering sex to Taylor Swift on 'Famous', he's writing light sabres of familial devotion on 'Wolves' *("I impregnate your mind, let's have a baby without fucking, yo")*. On '30 Hours', he pulls off the most masterful of these high-low art juxtapositions by taking a sample of cult New York oddball Arthur Russell's 'Answer Me' to get nostalgic about his own frailties *("I hit the gym, all chest no legs")*.

It's the sort of introspection 'The Life Of Pablo' could do with more of. On 'Real Friends', for instance, he names something very adult about the passage of time and the inevitable parting of ways that fatherhood brings: *"I couldn't tell you how old your daughter was/ Couldn't tell you how old your son is /I got my own junior on the way, dawg"*. Neither bitter nor blithe, it shows a novelist's eye.

Even so, it's hard to shake the sense of a man so immersed in his talents he thinks his very shit is golden. The genuinely brilliant and the merely good sip the same sizzurp at this LA party, and the postmodern LOLs of 'I Love Kanye', the tedious skit 'Silver Surfer Intermission', the needless Nike throwdown of 'Facts', the heaving guest-list that leaves our protagonist waiting in the wings too often and the head-scratch of mid-90s commercial house that closes things out on 'Dare' are all unwelcome guests.

More an obscure self-portrait than a Picasso masterpiece, 'The Life Of Pablo' retains its author's status as the most interesting man in music. But he makes it seem like harder work than the effortlessness we're used to.

Gavin Haynes

All work and no play

Occasionally brilliant, often too serious, mostly impressive, from a singer on the cusp of stardom

JACK GARRATT
Phase
★★★☆☆
BUZZY SYNTHY BEARDY

‘PHASE’ HAS BEEN a long time coming. At 13, Jack Garratt was one of seven unsuccessful finalists hoping to represent the UK at the 2005 Junior Eurovision Song Contest. Eleven years later, following a pre-uni acoustic blues phase and a stint of BBC Introducing support, the bearded Buckinghamshire lad has won both the BBC Sound of 2016 poll and the BRITs’ Critics’ Choice Award with his subwoofer-friendly ballads.

That same double-win is a feat shared by Sam Smith, Ellie Goulding and Adele, now all multi-platinum-selling artists. As the UK charts’ newest Big Deal, Garratt has perfectly pitched his debut, drawing on Ed Sheeran’s formula – loop-filled one-man performances amplified by big, sensitive vocals – and giving it a twist with satisfyingly meaty, on-trend synth work. Thanks to the 24-year-old’s undeniable skills as a multi-instrumentalist, producer and singer, talent oozes from ‘Phase’, even if it’s sometimes put to unadventurous use.

Two synesthesia-related tracks – ‘Coalesce’ and ‘Synesthesia Pt. III’ – are promisingly weird, inspired by the trippy, sense-swapping neurological condition Garratt’s girlfriend shares with musicians including Lorde and Pharrell. These two rework a brilliant, earth-juddering melody from his 2015 ‘Synesthesiac’ EP into a sort of synth-spluttering homage to ‘BTSTU’, the debut demo from enigmatic Rayner’s Lane dude Jai Paul. *“I’ll open up your mind,”* Garratt yells.

‘Phase’ doesn’t make good on that promise throughout, but is a showcase of solid songwriting and slick production. The dodgiest moments come from the lyrics, which flit from prematurely world-weary on ‘Weathered’ *(“If I never let you go/Will you keep me young?”)* to overblown self-indulgence on ‘My House Is Your Home’ *(“I’ve clothed my fears in the fabric of your dignity”)*. The pained optimism of ‘Surprise Yourself’ is least mind-opening of all, full of widescreen melodies and silly maxims like *“Talk without the tape to hold the doubts that should embrace your hope”*.

These overly earnest lines do a disservice to Garratt’s talents as a musician and producer, because the artful melodies and textures on ‘Phase’ really do shine.

Larry Bartleet

Jack Garratt

His thoughts on three tracks from ‘Phase’

BREATHE LIFE
“A song that came about really suddenly. It’s kind of about loss and what that can mean, and also the strength that people can find in losing something or someone.”

FAR CRY
“For me, it’s the most sombre and macabre song on the record. It highlights that we’re all just people, but instead of celebrating that, it finds a way to negate that.”

THE LOVE YOU’RE GIVEN
“It all came from an emotion in me of yearning for someone to take care of themselves. That empathy we feel for the people we love the most, who seem unaware of how much they’re loved. This song looks at that with selfishness, with the idea ‘You should take care of yourself, because then I’ll be happier’. An interesting way of expressing one’s ego.”

The really wild show

The Baltimore band's 10th album is a dizzying, lurid treat that'll blow minds when played live

ANIMAL COLLECTIVE
Painting With
★★★★☆
DRONES | JAMMING | MAD-POP

FOR THEIR FIRST eight albums, up to and including 2009's spectacular 'Merriweather Post Pavilion', Animal Collective honed new material at their effervescent live shows. That was where the Baltimore experimentalists liked to calculate *exactly* how their songs locked together and perfect every single detail of their thick sound.

Last time around, though, they got burned. As they mapped out 2012's 'Centipede Hz' on the road, each member (Panda Bear, Avey Tare, Geologist and Deakin) heard a different mix in his monitors and each entered the studio with a different idea of what worked. The result was a record none of the band was happy with.

So, for their 10th studio album 'Painting With', it's all change. Deakin is sitting this one out (nothing sinister, just the way Animal Collective do business) and the band have returned to basic principles they never had. That means 'jamming'.

Luckily, this hasn't resulted in an album of prog-rock atrocities. Instead, by sticking to Avey's pre-album promise of "no BS", they've reconnected with their pop smarts and come up with a concise and warm album.

America's Sunshine State is celebrated as a "*mystical place*" on the toytown stomp of single 'FloriDada', and potential hit 'Golden Gal' bounces along prettily in a toast to gender equality ("*You're so strong/You should hold your head above them*"). Of course it wouldn't be Animal Collective without Avey and Panda Bear's overlapping vocals valuing sound over meaning, or the acres of electronic noise everywhere.

'Hocus Pocus' disorientates with drone effects courtesy of ex-Velvet Underground guitarist John Cale, before surging into a sticky, psychedelic rush. 'On Delay' is busier still as its commanding two-note synth riff gives way to slammed beats and a rave break.

Yet out of this clatter they shape their own improbably lovely pop. "*My parents yelled, 'Beware of the ivory man!'*" is an unlikely hook, but 'The Burglars' pulls itself together with the band's beloved Beach Boys-y harmonies and the wordless chorus of 'Bagels In Kiev' flutters and chirrups like God's own lullaby.

Overall, 'Painting With' is a dizzying, lurid treat, almost too much to take in, craving its natural habitat. And it'll really come alive out in the wild. **Matthew Horton**

Animal Collective (l-r): Geologist, Avey Tare and Panda Bear

STRANGE BUT TRUE

Matt Groening is a fan. He put band member Panda Bear on the bill when he curated 2010's All Tomorrow's Parties festival and the song 'Winter's Love' featured in a 2012 episode of *The Simpsons* titled 'A Totally Fun Thing That Bart Will Never Do Again'.

RADAR

Also out this week

LNZNDRF
LNZNDRF
★★★★☆
On which a trio of Beirut (Ben Lanz) and The National (Bryan and Scott Devendorf) members distil their expansive improvisations into six-minute chunks of exhilarating indie-rock.

WOLFMOTHER
Victorious
★★★★☆
Aussie axe king Andrew Stockdale returns at full throttle on his first album in three years. Songs like 'Gypsy Caravan' and the title track have an AC/DC-like ferocity.

WILD NOTHING
Life Of Pause
★★★★☆
With 2010 debut 'Gemini' and 2012's equally brilliant 'Nocturne', Jack Tatum's Wild Nothing were set to become one of America's finest bands. Then they slumped, but 'Life Of Pause' is a luxurious step forward.

Read reviews of many more albums on NME.com

new music

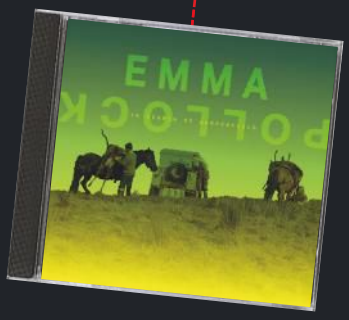
field music
commontime
out now

album of the month

animal collective
painting with
19/02/2016

bloc party
hymns
out now

emma pollock
in search of harperfield
out now



the cult
hidden city
out now

nevermen
nevermen
out now

night beats
who sold my generation
out now

money
suicide songs
out now

wild nothing
life of pause
19/02/2016

diiv
is the is are
out now

sunflower bean
human ceremony
out now

cavern of anti-matter
void beats / invocation trex
19/02/2016

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Blood and sand

The western revival continues with this gory, desert-trekking epic

BONE TOMAHAWK
18 *Kurt Russell, Patrick Wilson, Matthew Fox*
★★★★☆
WESTERN HORROR GORE

IT BEGINS WITH A THROAT being cut – with sawing motions and great wet gurgles. It's a long time until such violence comes again, but *Bone Tomahawk* warns you to prepare for it. Bed in, but don't settle.

This is the directing debut of Florida novelist S Craig Zahler and he's made a western with a definite literary bent – as happy to hang with quiet men doing nothing as it is to sling about frantic, bloody action. That slashed throat belongs to a poor man attacked by drifters somewhere in America's dusty nowhere in the 1890s.

When one of those drifters is killed by a barely seen Native American, the other tears into the local town of Bright Hope. This kicks off a sequence of events that sees the drifter and a doctor's assistant kidnapped by the Native Americans. The sheriff (*The Hateful Eight*'s gruff Kurt Russell), his helper (*Six Feet Under* star Richard Jenkins), the kidnapped doctor's assistant's broken-legged husband (*Fargo*'s Patrick Wilson) and a handsome stranger (*Lost*'s Matthew Fox) set off to rescue them.

Zahler takes it slow on the rescue, the better to let the men's personalities percolate. For a good hour it's just these four existing in quiet disagreement, testing each other's knowledge, honesty and masculinity as they trudge across identical bits of desert. Some of it may seem indulgent – at 130 minutes, the film is luxurious with its time – but the dialogue is so beautifully written that it's a pleasure just to sit and listen, and more importantly all that slowly won camaraderie becomes vital for the final stages to work.

Just when it seems the story is tying up, things take an abrupt – and gory – turn. The long, slow fuse of that trek ignites an explosion of blood, guts, death and excitement. Did we mention the killers are cannibals? What began as a stately western becomes a surreal horror, which none of these men would survive if they hadn't built a mutual understanding.

This strange combination of genres probably shouldn't work, yet it meshes perfectly. *Bone Tomahawk* is one of the best directing debuts in quite a while.

Olly Richards

Fresh from *The Hateful Eight*, Kurt Russell (right) is back for more gore

FOR FANS OF

TRUE GRIT

MAD MAX

Don't let the horses fool you – this is *not* your average western

CALIBER MEDIA, REX, WARNER BROS, WORLDVIEW

Rebel Wilson (left) plays for laughs

Lonely hearts club

Rebel Wilson's brashness triumphs, but a clunky plot makes this romcom hard to fall for

HOW TO BE SINGLE

15 ***Dakota Johnson, Rebel Wilson, Alison Brie***

★★☆☆☆

ROMCOM SQUADGOALS SAPPINESS

DESPITE ITS ANTI-ROMANTIC title, *How To Be Single* isn't really all that radical a romcom. Based on the best-selling novel by former *Sex And The City* script editor Liz Tuccillo, it's merely one with an extra dose of sisterly solidarity and a trite but well-meaning message: don't define yourself by your relationship.

Feeling suffocated by her boyfriend, Alice (*Fifty Shades Of Grey*'s Dakota Johnson) tells him they're on a break, moves in with her workaholic older sister Meg (*This Is 40*'s Leslie Mann) and gets a job at a New York City law firm. There she meets Robin (*Pitch Perfect*'s Rebel Wilson), a brash free spirit who fully embraces a life of after-work partying and waking up next to a different guy every morning. Their favourite drinking hole happens to be frequented by Lucy (*Mad Men* star Alison Brie), a woman so obsessed with finding The One that she's signed up to 10 different dating websites.

Although German director Christian Ditter (who previously made 2014 slush-fest *Love, Rosie*) introduces each character pretty efficiently, he never quite manages to weave their individual stories together. Trapped at the periphery throughout, Brie's character is so two-dimensional we never even find out if she has a job.

The inconsistent and derivative tone is also a bit of a letdown. Johnson provides a rather clunky *Sex And The City*-style voiceover and when a pregnant character's waters break on the street it's an obvious attempt to inject some *Bridesmaids*-esque bodily fluids humour. Yet at times, the interactions between the female leads and their male romantic interests reach Richard Curtis levels of sap.

Fortunately though, there are some genuinely funny moments. Playing what is essentially a hybrid of Amy Schumer's *Trainwreck* heroine and her own *Pitch Perfect* character Fat Amy, Rebel Wilson steals nearly every scene. When she hails a taxi by jumping on its bonnet and telling the driver, "If you take me to the hospital, I won't sue!" it's silly but hilarious. OK, the laughs aren't enough to paper over the cracks, but they definitely provide a welcome distraction. **Nick Levine**

STRANGE BUT TRUE

Rebel Wilson turned up in person to the press screening *NME* attended and said Alison Brie had an STD while filming.

Also out this week

TRIPLE 9

12 ***Casey Affleck, Anthony Mackie, Kate Winslet***

★★★☆☆

An extremely talented cast can't save a film that's essentially a cut-and-shut of the plots of every crooked cop movie you've ever seen.

LIST FOR LIFE

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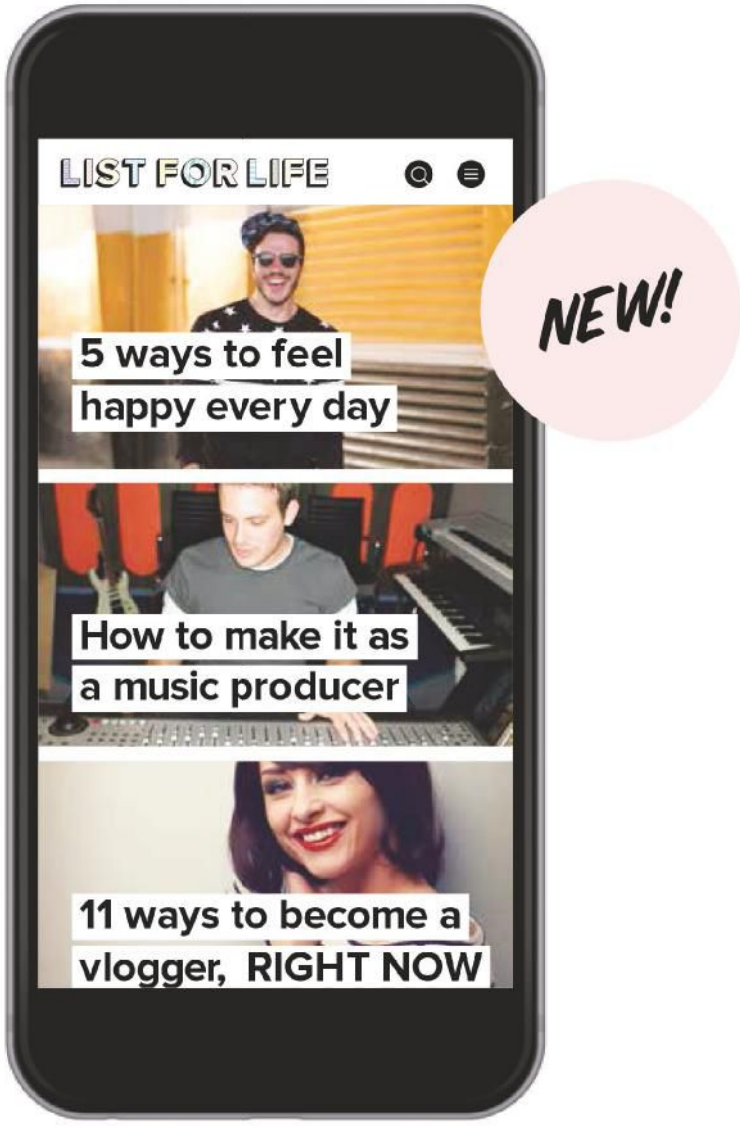

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"The record is peaceful. The live show is... epic"

Whitney's debut album is out this summer

BEN BENTLEY, DANIEL TOPETE, REX

Whitney

Nudity-loving Chicago band pretending to be winsome '60s singer-songwriter. Meta!

SCROLL TO THE BOTTOM of Whitney's Instagram page (@whitneyband) and you'll find photographs of all six band members stark naked, with various household objects protecting their modesty. Drummer/vocalist Julien Ehrlich uses a lightbulb, while guitarist Max Kakacek deploys tinned vegetables. Today, the Chicago band's songwriting core – who became friends while playing in now-defunct glam dreamers Smith Westerns – are fully dressed in their Chicago apartment.

So, whose idea was the nudity? "Mine – it was summer and I felt we should be naked sometimes," says Julien, who also used to play in Portland psych group Unknown Mortal Orchestra. "Now it's winter so me and our other guitarist are getting red and white onesies. We're gonna look like human candy canes."

His wacky chat is in keeping with Whitney's image. In the nine months since releasing debut demo 'No Matter Where We Go' they've emerged as America's coolest new band, a gang of childhood friends who skinny-dip, neck beers and play ridiculously fun live shows. But Whitney's best asset is their music. Influenced by Sam Cooke and 'Nashville Skyline'-era Bob Dylan, their gentle, soulful songs – which germinated after Max and Julien formed the band around the concept of a depressed fictional songwriter named Whitney and spent a freezing Chicago winter drinking indoors – sound like dusted-off '60s classics.

Recorded in Los Angeles with Foxygen's Jonathan Rado on production duties, their debut album is due this summer, but before that their party bus stops here for their first UK tour. "The record is peaceful; the live show is... epic," says Max. "Yeah," finishes Julien. "We want to write great songs and tour the f*** out of them."

Ben Homewood

FOR FANS OF

UNKNOWN MORTAL ORCHESTRA

BOB DYLAN

Details

BUY 'No Woman' is out now on Secretly Canadian

LIVE
Feb 20 The White Hotel, Manchester
Feb 21 Brudenell Games Room, Leeds
Feb 22 Green Door Store, Brighton

FACT
Whitney slept in a five-man tent in a garden for three weeks while recording their album

SOCIAL
facebook.com/whitneychicago

For more on Whitney, head to NME.com

Best track

'No Woman'

A proper break-up weepie built on brass, intertwining guitars and falsetto vocals.

live

THE 10 MOST IMPORTANT GIGS THIS WEEK

1

Foals

Fri 19 Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham
Sat 20 First Direct Arena, Leeds

WHO: Oxford rockers who've recently been announced as Reading & Leeds headliners and are about to complete their UK arena tour.
WHY: After performing one of his primal sets last year, frontman Yannis said he'd snapped his larynx. They don't hold back.
WHO'S SUPPORTING: Manchester's art-rock heroes Everything Everything, plus an opening DJ set from Peace.
TICKETS: £21.45-£33.25 from ents24.com

2

Fat White Family

Sat 20 O2 Institute, Birmingham
Sun 21 Rescue Rooms, Nottingham
Mon 22 The Plug, Sheffield
Tue 23 Whelan's, Dublin
Thu 25 The Limelight, Belfast

WHO: South London maniacs, fronted by Saul Adamczewski and best friend Lias Saoudi, who are fresh from the release of their second album 'Songs For Our Mothers'.
WHY: They're their own phenomenon live – nudity, drugs, animal carcasses and fighting are all on the cards.
WHO'S SUPPORTING: No details yet.
TICKETS: £12 from nme.com/tickets

3

Savages

Fri 19 Junction, Cambridge
Sun 21 The Art School, Glasgow
Mon 22 Albert Hall, Manchester
Tue 23 Irish Centre, Leeds

WHO: Snarly London-based four-piece fronted by French-born Jehnny Beth. They describe their second album 'Adore Life' as "rollercoaster music".

WHY: They're a supremely watchable gang who mix disarming lyrics into their torrents of brutalist neo-goth thrash.
WHO'S SUPPORTING: Japanese acid-punk quartet Bo Ningen – they of the gloopy riffs and the beauteous hair.
TICKETS: £16.50-£19.25 from ents24.com

4

Swim Deep

Wed 24 The Dome, London

WHO: Birmingham's brightest indie kids turned psych devils. Formed by Austin Williams, Tom Higgins and Wolfgang J Harte, they released the rather excellent album 'Mothers' last autumn.

WHY: Their mind-melting synths burrow deep into psychedelic wormholes – and it's brilliant.
WHO'S SUPPORTING: Michigan noise duo Sweat and Glaswegian indie-rock group Catholic Action.
TICKETS: £17.16 from nme.com/awards/tickets

5

Crystal Castles

Tue 23 & Wed 24
Electrowerkz, London

WHO: Known for their crunchy electronica, the band was formed by Toronto-born Ethan Kath. They returned in 2015 with single 'Frail'.

WHY: New frontwoman Edith Frances is proving just as interesting a performer as original singer Alice Glass.
WHO'S SUPPORTING: No details yet.
TICKETS: Sold out, but available from secondary ticketing sites for £22.10

6

Halsey

Fri 19 O2 Academy, Glasgow
Sat 20 O2 Academy, Birmingham
Mon 22 Academy, Manchester
Tue 23 O2 Academy Brixton, London

WHO: Justin Bieber collaborator from New Jersey. She calls her music 'New Americana' and herself "kind of an a**hole".
WHY: She's just 21, but she's already conquered the globe as a pop sensation.
WHO'S SUPPORTING: Michigan psych-pop man BØRNS and LA four-piece Flor.
TICKETS: Sold out, but available on secondary ticketing sites from £26

For tour news and live reviews go to NME.com

7

Hinds

Sat 20 Gorilla, Manchester
Sun 21 Stereo, Glasgow
Mon 22 Brudenell Social Club, Leeds
Tue 23 Hare & Hounds, Birmingham
Wed 24 The Fleece, Bristol

WHO: Spanish garage rock quartet co-fronted by Carlotta Cosials and Ana García Perrote. They released debut album 'Leave Me Alone' in the first week of January.
WHY: They're well known for encouraging stage invasions and their inclusive gang performance is tons of fun. Join the party.
WHO'S SUPPORTING: New York's hot property Public Access TV.
TICKETS: From £11 at ents24.com

8

NME AWARDS SHOWS 2016 with Austin

Blossoms

Fri 19 Concorde 2, Brighton
Sat 20 The Bullingdon, Oxford
Wed 24 The Welly Club, Hull
Thu 25 Scala, London

WHO: Five-piece from Stockport fronted by Tom Ogden. "We just want to be as big as we can," they say.
WHY: Their glittering indie-pop earned them a place on the BBC's Sound of 2016 longlist.
WHO'S SUPPORTING: Liverpool psych unit The Vryll Society and South Londoners Inheaven.
TICKETS: £11.50 from ents24.com

9

Enter Shikari

Fri 19 Corn Exchange, Edinburgh
Sat 20 Motorpoint Arena, Nottingham
Mon 22 The BIC, Bournemouth
Tue 23 Motorpoint Arena, Cardiff
Thu 25 Victoria Warehouse, Manchester

WHO: Post-hardcore quartet from St Albans whose fourth album 'Mindsweep' was released at the beginning of last year.
WHY: Beardy frontman Rou Reynolds is an eminent showman rabble-rouser.
WHO'S SUPPORTING: Pennsylvania pop-punk crew The Wonder Years.
TICKETS: £28 from seetickets.com

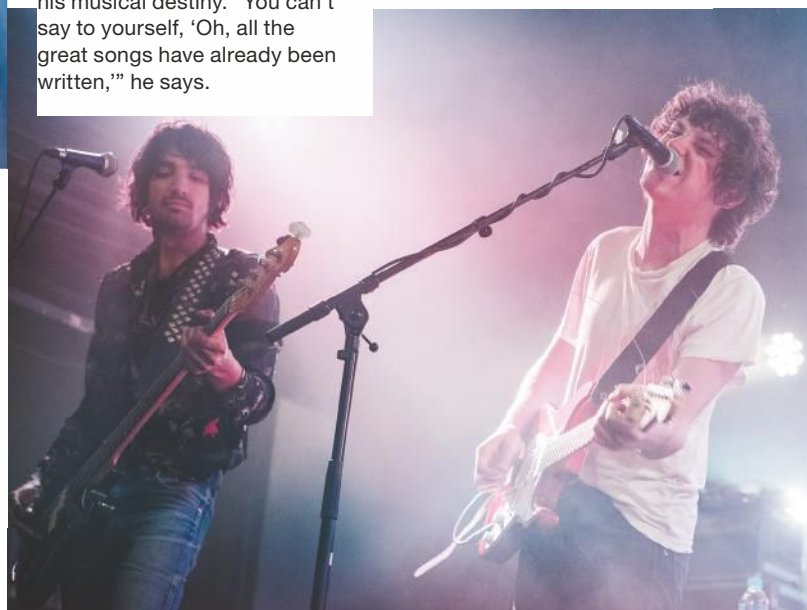
10

NME AWARDS SHOWS 2016 with Austin

Public Access TV

Thu 25 Birthdays, London

WHO: New York lads led by John Eatherly, who dropped out of school aged 16 to pursue his musical destiny. "You can't say to yourself, 'Oh, all the great songs have already been written,'" he says.
WHY: Recent track 'On Location' could be one of the sounds of this summer.
WHO'S SUPPORTING: South London's Misty Miller and Blackpool's Strange Bones.
TICKETS: £11.66 from nme.com/awards/tickets



Best of the rest

Girl Band
Fri 19 John Peel Centre for Creative Arts, Stowmarket
Sat 20 Concorde 2, Brighton
Mon 22 Hare & Hounds, Birmingham
Tue 23 Trades Club, HebdenBridge
Wed 24 The Buyers Club, Liverpool

BEN BENTLEY, ROB BLACKHAM, DEREK BREMNER, CORBIS, GETTY IMAGES, ANDY HUGHES, JORDAN HUGHES, DAN KENDALL, ED MILES, PA

2ManyDJs
Fri 19 Concorde, Brighton

Baio
Tue 23 King Tut's, Glasgow
Wed 24 Soup Kitchen, Manchester
Thu 25 The Pickle Factory, London

Big Narstie
Wed 24 O2 Academy, Islington

Bill Ryder-Jones
Thu 25 The Ferret, Preston

Boy & Bear
Fri 19 The Liquid Room, Edinburgh
Sat 20 Leeds University Stylus, Leeds
Sun 21 Academy, Manchester
Tue 23 O2 Forum, London
Wed 24 The Globe, Cardiff
Thu 25 O2 Academy, Birmingham

Cage The Elephant
Fri 19 Unity Works, Wakefield
Sat 20 O2 Ritz, Manchester

Car Seat Headrest
Tue 23 The Dalston Victoria, London

Cattle & Cane
Fri 19 King George's Hall, Blackburn
Sat 20 Studio 2, Liverpool
Mon 22 Bodega, Nottingham
Tue 23 The Lexington, London
Wed 24 Adelphi, Hull
Thu 25 The Venue, Derby

READER'S PICK

Jo
41, Petersfield
@offthecuffjo

The Charlatans
Thu 25 Engine Rooms, Southampton
"First saw Tim Burgess 'late in life' in an Italian field in 2014. Now addicted!!"

The Charlatans
Thu 25 Engine Rooms, Southampton

The Crookes
Fri 19 Studio 2, Liverpool
Sat 20 Sound Control, Manchester
Sun 21 The Talking Heads, Southampton
Tue 23 The Hope & Ruin, Brighton
Wed 24 Oslo, London
Thu 25 The Hippodrome, Kingston

Empress Of
Mon 22 Gullivers, Manchester
Tue 23 Moth Club, London

Fatherson
Sat 20 The Talking Heads, Southampton
Sun 21 The Hope & Ruin, Brighton
Tue 23 The Borderline, London
Wed 24 Brudenell Social Club, Leeds
Thu 25 Gullivers, Manchester

Flowers
Fri 19 The Continental, Preston
Sat 20 The Rainbow Courtyard, Birmingham
Thu 25 Fallow, Manchester

Foxes
Tue 23 Limelight, Belfast

Four Tet
Sun 21 Sub Club, Glasgow

Fufanu
Thu 25 The Shipping Forecast, Liverpool

Heaters
Fri 19 The Shacklewell Arms, London

Here We Go Magic
Mon 22 XOYO, London

Jess Glynne
Sat 20 & Sun 21 O2 Academy Brixton, London

The Joy Formidable
Sun 21 The Deaf Institute, Manchester
Mon 22 Clwb Ifor Bach, Cardiff
Tue 23 Oslo, London
Wed 24 The Rainbow Courtyard, Birmingham
Thu 25 King Tut's, Glasgow

Josh Flowers & The Wild
Thu 25 The Barfly, London

Julia Holter
Fri 19 SWG3, Glasgow
Sat 20 Summerhall, Edinburgh

King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard
Fri 19 The Haunt, Brighton

Leona Lewis
Sun 21 Empire Theatre, Liverpool
Mon 22 Memorial & City Hall, Sheffield
Wed 24 Bridgewater Hall, Manchester
Thu 25 Sage, Gateshead

Marina And The Diamonds
Sat 20 & Sun 21 The Roundhouse, London

Mystery Jets
Fri 19 Gorilla, Manchester
Sat 20 The Art School, Glasgow

Oneohtrix Point Never
Wed 24 Heaven, London

Philco Fiction
Sat 20 KOKO, London

PINS
Fri 19 Thekla, Bristol

Richard Hawley
Fri 19 Barbican, York
Sat 20 O2 Guildhall, Southampton
Sun 21 UEA LCR, Norwich
Tue 23 Eventim Apollo, London
Wed 24 O2 Apollo, Manchester

The Rifles
Wed 24 Thekla, Bristol
Thu 25 The Wedgewood Rooms, Portsmouth

Show Me The Body
Sun 21 Temple of Boom, Leeds

Spring King
Fri 19 The Deaf Institute, Manchester
Sat 20 Nation Of Shopkeepers, Leeds

Steve Aoki
Fri 19 O2 Academy Brixton, London
Sat 20 Guild of Students, Liverpool

Sundara Karma
Tue 23 Thekla, Bristol
Wed 24 The Bullingdon, Oxford
Thu 25 The Talking Heads, Southampton

Sunflower Bean
Fri 19 Bleach, Brighton

Telegram
Fri 19 Ku Bar, Stockton-on-Tees
Sat 20 Think Tank, Newcastle
Mon 22 Headrow House, Leeds
Tue 23 The Harley, Sheffield
Wed 24 Clwb Ifor Bach, Cardiff
Thu 25 The Hope & Ruin, Brighton

Tigercats
Sat 20 The Cluny, Newcastle

CLUB NME
Flawes
Fri 19 KOKO London

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Soundtrack of my life

David Duchovny

***The X-Files* actor and singer in a rock'n'roll band**

The first song I remember hearing

THE FRIENDS OF DISTINCTION
Grazing In The Grass
"I bought 45s when I was a kid because they were cheaper, at 99 cents, where an album cost three dollars and 69 cents, which was too much for my budget. The first single I bought was called 'Grazing In The Grass'. It's kind of an R&B/soul number. '*Grazing in the grass is a gas, baby, can you dig it?*'"

The song I wish I'd written

OASIS
Wonderwall
"I have this as an alarm on my phone so I hear it very often. A perfect pop song is a thing of beauty and I'd say this is a perfect pop song. But there are so many songs I wish I'd written. Another one that comes into my head is 'One' by U2. I also wish I'd written 'Dear Prudence' by The Beatles, from 'The White Album', and 'Thank You' by Sly & The Family Stone."

The album that changed my life

THE BEATLES
The White Album
"It's a thing that points to certain mysteries that I wasn't quite yet ready to understand. There are throwaways on it; it wasn't all hits. That kind of got me off the 'just the hits' feeling that I had when I was a kid. At the time I thought, 'Why get a whole album? Just play the hits!' But a few albums changed my life. There was also Elton John's 'Goodbye Yellow Brick Road', which seemed to have a big scope. It seemed like a lot was being dealt with. And 'Fresh' by Sly & The Family Stone. And some Yes albums; I was into Yes. There was a lot of pot smoking going on at a certain point. Yes were good for that."

The song I play to get ready for a gig

VARIOUS
"Backstage when I'm with the band we'll start singing some songs, but they're always different. We'll also stand in a huddle, put our arms around each other and say something vaguely inspirational, like 'Rock'n'roll!' Something clichéd and ridiculous like that. Or maybe, 'Let's go melt some faces!'"

The song I can no longer listen to

KING HARVEST
Dancing In The Moonlight
"I think if you can't bear to listen to a song any more, it passes. All things pass. But there are certain songs I used to play for my kids that brutally remind me of the passage of time. This was on a mixtape I used to play in the car to get them to sleep. I hear it now and think: 'Oh my God, my kids aren't three any more.' It feels rough."

The song that makes me dance

SLY & THE FAMILY STONE
Thank You
"I'm never able to stop myself from dancing. There's no song that makes me unable to dance."

Go to NME.com for more Soundtracks

The band that made me want to make music

THE BEATLES
"They were my favourite band for forever. But when I started to play guitar and think about songs together, it was Bob Dylan and The Band. More straight-ahead, rootsy rock'n'roll."

The song I want played at my funeral

DAVID DUCHOVNY
Stars
"I'd send 'em off with one of my songs. I don't care what they say afterwards. 'How egotistical!' Well, I'm dead, I don't care. 'Stars' has a cosmic feel to it; the lyrics are kind of eternal and centre on the fact that you see light from some stars that are dead because it takes so long to travel to us. It would be good for the funeral because it's a meditation on death. Some things appear to be alive but are actually dead."

David's album 'Hell Or Highwater' is out now

LAST WORD

The wisdom of the *NME* archives

THIS WEEK
NOEL GALLAGHER
Oasis songwriter
17 February 1996
"If you took a kid from the Bronx and a kid from Brixton who probably have nothing in common, well, the one thing they'd have in common is they'd own a copy of '(What's The Story) Morning Glory?'"

PHOTOS: CAMERA PRESS, GETTY, REX

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